

JAN 3 REC'D



Capital Humane Society  
2320 Park Boulevard  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
(402) 477-7722



December 29, 1988

Dan Laster, Ph.D., Director  
USDA, ARS  
Roman L. Hruska  
U.S. Meat Animal Research Center  
P.O. Box 106  
Clay Center, Nebraska 68933

Dear Dan,

Since I have not really heard any news regarding the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center I am curious in regards to actions that have been taken. Please respond as soon as possible.

I hope your holidays have been enjoyable and wish you the best for the New Year.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Downey  
Executive Director, Capital Humane Society  
President, Nebraska Coalition of Humane Societies



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Agricultural  
Research  
Service

Northern Plains Area  
Roman L. Hruska  
U.S. Meat Animal  
Research Center

P.O. Box 166  
Clay Center, Nebraska  
68933

January 17, 1989

Mr. Robert A. Downey, Executive Director  
Capital Humane Society  
2320 Park Boulevard  
Lincoln, NE 68502

Dear Mr. Downey:

Animal care and use at the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) is an important concern, and we wish to thank you for your constructive comments following your November 4, 1988, visit. We realize that animal care concerns are based both on fact and perception. Our discussions with you have been helpful to us in addressing these areas.

We have initiated, through our Animal Care Committee, a review process for all surgical procedures associated with research projects. Recommendations for improvement of animal care and techniques have been made or will be made to the individual researchers and associated animal caretakers.

Protocols are being established for the recording of laboratory and farm animal surgery, morbidity, and mortality information for those few animals which are not covered in our health record system.

Modifications are being planned for Building 2 surgery which will address some of the concerns you expressed regarding lack of security or "openness" in that building.

We appreciate the constructive nature of your visit to MARC. We would be glad to have you join our Animal Care Committee in its next regular meeting (early March). We can coordinate the scheduling of this meeting with your schedule for mutual convenience. If a date in March will fit your schedule for a visit to MARC, please call Dr. Gary Ross (402-762-4136).

If you receive any further complaints or concerns on animal care at MARC, please contact Dr. Ross or me so we can take appropriate action.

Sincerely,

D. B. LASTER  
Center Director

cc:  
G. S. Ross

November 27, 1985

SUBJECT: Animal Care Concerns

TO: Robert R. Oltjen

On November 15, 1985, we held an Animal Care Committee meeting to discuss business since our last meeting, before Dr. W. G. Kvasnicka departed. The following was our agenda:

1. G. L. Hahn discussed the meeting on ARS Animal Care Guidelines and what the draft contained.
2. I discussed the program of the Animal Welfare Committee of the U.S. Animal Health Association.
3. I brought to the Committees attention my actions in response to M. Wallace's request for guidance (copies attached).
4. I reviewed with the Committee the three reports of inhumane care brought to my attention during the period of August to October, 1985; cow with double prolapse; cow with massive abscesses from lost catheter; and concern over GPU protocol for intervention during calving difficulties. (I brought these to your and the Research Leaders' attention during our meeting on October 21.)
5. Committee members discussed complaints and problems brought to their attention.
  - a. Stress brought on sheep moved out of Building 2 and other heated facilities when research was completed. Apparently, no recovery/acclimatization facilities are available. Apparently, some rams are kept inside during the workweek and turned out over the weekend.
  - b. Do electric Stock Still devices prevent pain or just immobilize animals? Should we have a physiologist study this apparent problem?
  - c. One room in Building 2 seemed to be excessively dirty.
  - d. Five sheep died from overcrowding.
  - e. Excessive use of prodding devices on cattle.
  - f. How do we increase employees awareness of animal care?
6. Advantages and disadvantages of belonging to the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) as an institutional member.

I discussed items 5a, c, and d with M. Wallace. He and the others involved in 5c and d are taking action. However, there seems to be no solution to item 5a, without purchase or lease of some temporary heating system for Building 38.

Item 5e, is being carried to Cattle Operations by R. Sampson.

I have tried to contact the UNL veterinary physiologist to determine what he/she knows.

I and the Committee are at a loss on item 5f. Any advice?

In connection with item 6, the advantages seem to be in favor of joining AALAS as an institutional member. Advantages: 1) we can have three individuals as its institutional representatives to AALAS with all rights and privileges; 2) we can get three copies of the AALAS official publication Laboratory Animal Science (We presently are purchasing one copy through the Library for \$60--which we will save.); 3) we will have access to the AALAS slide sets, films and other educational materials; and 4) we will be involved with the activities of AALAS. Disadvantages: 1) AALAS is lab animal oriented and MARC has few lab animals; and 2) membership may bring more visibility to the MARC, which we may not want.

I recommend that you obtain an institutional membership for the MARC.



JOHN M. VETTERLING  
Chairman  
Animal Care Committee

Enclosures

cc:

R. B. Anderson  
S. E. Echternkamp  
M. S. McAlhany  
R. L. Sampson  
M. J. Stear

October 8, 1985

SUBJECT: Species Separation in Building 2

TO: Mike Wallace

Pursuant to our conversation concerning your memo on this subject (October 7, 1985), I contacted Dr. Richard R. Bowen, Area Veterinarian in Charge, Veterinary Services, APHIS; and Dr. Peter J. Matthews, Animal Supply Officer, NADC. They both stated that the NIH Guidelines were just that, guidelines. However, common sense should prevail. The obvious stress caused by putting cats in the same room with mice or dogs with rabbits is uncalled for. Likewise, the stress related to different temperature requirements should be avoided (as you point out in your memo). Having considered these conditions, the only remaining factor is that of disease transmission.

Mice and rats--you should contact the source of your animals and determine what diseases they have checked for. If you are getting high quality animals that have been fairly well screened for disease, then it is relatively safe to house them in the same room. If not, you should worry. If you are getting the mice and rats from the same vendor, you should be safe since the vendor is probably taking measures to control diseases. If the vendors are different, I think you will be taking a chance. You should separate the two species as far as practical or, if you have the resources, provide separate air sources.

Sheep and cattle--the same principles apply. In this case, we should identify the animals to be placed together and conduct a serological assay to determine susceptibility to disease agents and insure that we do not jeopardize individuals of one or the other species.

With these thoughts in mind, why don't you plan your proposed use of Building 2. Then get back with me and the Committee can look at the proposed species combinations.

JOHN M. VETTERLING  
Chairman  
Animal Care Committee

cc:  
Animal Care Committee  
Dave Rethorst

October 7, 1985

SUBJECT: Species Separation In Building 2

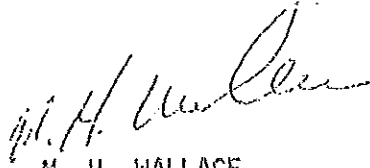
✓ TO: J. M. Vetterling  
Chairperson, MARC Animal Care Committee

Rooms 202 and 203 in building 2 will be removed from the ventilation system. This will reduce our ability to maintain species separations by rooms and meet facility requirements for anticipated experiments.

Previous to this time we have functioned under an interpretation of, "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," DHEW publication, No. (NIH) 78-2-3, revised 1978, page 12, and AM535, exhibit 2, part 3, subpart E, paragraph 3.103 which suggests species separation by rooms.

We are currently housing rats and mice in the same room but have received verbal criticism due to a potential for interspecies viral transmissions. We have not placed pigs and sheep in the same room due to potential for pseudorabies transmission and the different temperature requirements. Cattle and sheep have not been housed in the same room due to potential for Johnes transmission. Rabbits and rats/mice are housed separately to provide for different temperature requirements.

We have routinely housed rats, mice, guinea pigs, sheep, pigs, rabbits, and cattle in building 2. Please advise as to which, if any, of these species can be housed in the same room but different cages/pens in building 2.



M. H. WALLACE  
Sheep Operations Manager

cc:  
B. Larsen  
R. Lindvall  
R. Oltjen

NOV 8 REC'D



Capital Humane Society  
2320 Park Boulevard  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
(402) 477-7722

*File  
Animal Care*

*Copy rec'd for and  
given to Ross 11/8/88*

November 5, 1988

Dan Laster, Ph.D., Director  
Gary Ross, DVM  
USDA, ARS  
Roman L. Hruska  
U.S. Meat Animal Research Center  
P.O. Box 166  
Clay Center, Nebraska 68933

Gentlemen,

This letter is the follow up that I promised when I visited your facility on November 4, 1988 with Larry Buller, DVM. In this letter I will be summarizing the complaints of several individuals given to me both in writing and by telephone, beginning on October 6, 1988. I will also share with you some observations I made during my visit and finally will offer a few suggestions for your consideration.

I would like to reassure you that my intentions are not of an adversarial nature. My interests lie with the humane treatment of animals. My desires are to assure those who have asked for my help and the public in general that humane animal treatment is a priority at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center. The courtesy extended to me and the open discussion we were able to engage in with no notice being given to you left me with a feeling that this was truly the case.

Concerns brought to my attention by former and current employees fall into the following areas;

1. Experimental surgery is being performed in some (not all) cases by untrained, unskilled and unsupervised staff. This has resulted in the suffering of animals and in some cases the subsequent death of animals.
2. Post surgical care in some cases has been lacking, again resulting in suffering of animals.
3. There is a lack of record keeping for all drugs that are used in surgery and a lack of veterinary input for post surgical difficulties.
4. On occasion aseptic and septic surgeries have taken place in the same room at the same time.
5. Record keeping has also fallen short in recording the date, method and reason for the destruction or the death of every experimental animal.

It is difficult for me to know how specific to get before I start making it possible to identify any of those people who have contacted me. They have requested anonymity.

Observations that I made during my visit were as follows;

1. It was easy for me as a visitor to enter the building, move about freely and enter the surgery area. I sincerely appreciate and applaud the openness of your facility. However, I do feel you have a right to know when any visitor is present. Your employees, the animals in your care and the taxpayers investment all deserve a reasonable level of security.
2. Overall, the surgery and recovery area appeared clean and organized. A few stainless steel enclosures that were holding swine after surgery seemed to have old feces around the edges.
3. I observed ovary related surgery being performed on sheep during my visit and most everything seemed to be in order. However I was disturbed by two incidences I saw related to the movement of sedated sheep. One sheep which was being brought to surgery fell off the cart. Another sheep which was being moved out of surgery had to be removed from the cart by only one person. This was accomplished by simply pushing it off the cart. It is interesting to note that 2 of the other 4 people in this team of 5 were busy in the surgery room eating donuts at that time. I admit that the carts being used were about 12 to 18 inches off the ground, however the possibility of bruising tissues or bones and damaging blood vessels exists. Also the image drawn by most perceivers of such treatment would be one of "non caring" by the handlers of these animals.
4. I was alarmed at the amount of feces and urine present on the concrete slabs of cattle holding pens where feed studies were being conducted.
5. I was also surprised at the number of sheep crowded into a single holding pen in the confinement building, although I have been told this is not unusual.

In our discussions, Dr. Buller does not agree with me on points four and five. I still bring them up because they are the true reaction I had upon seeing them. I feel they would be the reaction of most urban visitors to you facility. Also with the reality that more students of veterinary medicine will be visiting your facility in the near future, those who come from a more urban background may also have the same reaction.



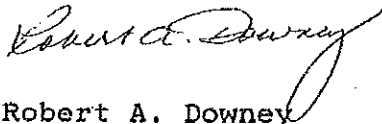
Suggestions would be as follows;

1. Although the number of veterinarians is presently limited at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, it might be worthwhile for unannounced spot checks of surgery to take place. The same would hold true for required records related to research.
2. There is an animal welfare committee at the facility, but my impression is that it meets only if there is a problem. A minimum of 2 meetings and possibly 3 to 4 should be held each year with an agenda. Each meeting should be started with a tour of facilities and observations of ongoing animal work that day. The meetings should be known only to committee members so that facades could not be created on those days. It is my opinion that the community member of the committee should not be someone from another USDA facility. I feel it would be good to have someone from the religious community or an open minded person from the humane community on the committee. I realize it might be difficult to find someone in the geographic area who is interested and would therefore volunteer myself for a minimum of one years service while a more local, interested and knowledgeable person is sought.
3. Since most surgery is not performed by a licensed veterinarian, I feel an emergency communication system would be of value to handle those situations that may arise and could not be handled by someone trained to perform only a specific surgical technique.

I would like to point out that those people who contacted me were not questioning the validity of any research that goes on the facility. The problems brought to my attention were related to the procedures used by a minority of those involved in animal surgeries. It is the feeling of these individuals that overall the general care of the animals at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center is good and that most research scientists at the facility are conscientious in their work. There is however a feeling that those who are not seem to go about their work unmonitored and face no consequences.

I hope that this is all helpful to you in a constructive manner. Again, my only desire is to help you insure that the humane treatment of animals at your facility is at as high a level as possible. It is only through a mutual understanding between rational minds in both the scientific and animal welfare fields that there will be real benefit to the animals that we all love and respect.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert A. Downey". The signature is fluid and extends to the right.

Robert A. Downey  
Executive Director, Capital Humane Society  
President, Nebraska Coalition of Humane Societies

Op.  
Cattle

February 5, 1987

SUBJECT: Neglectful Hay Feeding of Cattle

TO: R. N. Lindvall  
Livestock and Land Operations Manager

FROM: Robert R. Oltjen  
Center Director

Please give me a full accounting of the circumstances surrounding the content of the memo from Gordon Hays to you and J. D. Franklin on the above subject dated February 4, 1987, when I return on February 17, 1987.

It appears some serious problems arose, and I need to know if any other background information is available concerning this episode.

ARS:RLHUSMARC:RROltjen/11k:X201:2/5/87